

Gregory, George

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FACTS

AND

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FROM

DISTINGUISHED PHYSICIANS

AND

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OTHER SOURCES.

Samuel
George Gregory

Second Edition.

BOSTON:

D. S. KING.—JORDAN & CO.

32 —121 Washington street.

1842.

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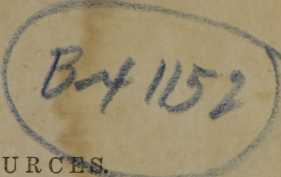
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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1841, by GEORGE GREGORY, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

PREFACE.

THE object of this little work is, to spread information in regard to the dangerous and, oftentimes, fatal consequences of the habit usually denominated Masturbation or Solitary Vice; a practice known to be exceedingly prevalent among all classes of the community, and most desolating in its effects on the body, mind, and moral principle.

If any doubt the propriety or necessity of circulating knowledge of this kind, they will be better able to judge, after a perusal of these *facts*; till then, the following opinions may suffice.

DR. BELL, Superintendent of the McLean Asylum, Charlestown, in the preface of a small work on this subject, thus remarks: "We do not fear overstocking the public demand with works urging on the temperance reformation; and why should we fear in regard to this matter, when it is discovered that there is a foul plague in our midst, cutting off, amongst the young, the beautiful, and the promising of our land, well nigh as many victims as strong drink."

DR. WOODWARD, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital, at Worcester, in one of his Annual

Reports of that Institution, remarks as follows:—
“It is the vice of ignorance, not of depravity; and the interests of humanity imperatively demand, that something should be done to rescue the most moral, conscientious, and sometimes the most promising youth of the State, from the mind-wasting ravages of an indulgence of whose terrible consequences they have never been forewarned.”

PROFESSOR STUART, of Andover, in a recommendation of this pamphlet, uses the following language: “It is time for those who love the purity, the well-being and the most interesting relations of human society, to speak out upon a vice which is dangerous in proportion to the secrecy and silence in which it has been involved.”

PROFESSOR FINNEY, of Oberlin, Ohio, also remarks: “I am deeply impressed with the conviction, that information upon this subject is greatly needed, and that the general diffusion of knowledge in respect to this vice, would result in incalculable good.”

This work has been highly commended, as being calculated to do good; and a large edition has been sold within a few months. The present edition is considerably improved by the addition of valuable materials recently obtained; by which it is hoped that its influence and usefulness may be increased.

GEO. GREGORY.

Boston, *Jan.* 1842.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The following highly valuable testimonial is from
PROFESSOR STUART, REV. DR. WOODS, and PROF.
EMERSON, of the Andover Theological Seminary.

ANDOVER, 29th July, 1841.

I have read a pamphlet entitled "FACTS, etc., from DISTINGUISHED PHYSICIANS AND OTHER SOURCES," respecting a vice which is undermining the health and happiness of many, and degrading them, in some respects, below the brute creation.

I think there is nothing in the manner of this pamphlet which can be matter of just offence to any considerate mind. I am persuaded, that, delicate as the task may be, the time has come, when benevolence demands that some effort should be made to enlighten the public mind on the subject of which this pamphlet treats, and both the remarks of the pamphlet, and the facts stated in it, seem to be well adapted for this purpose. Most heartily do I wish success to that benevolence which is willing to undertake a task so delicate and so difficult as this.

It is time for those who love the purity, the well-being and the most interesting relations of human society, to speak out upon a vice which is dangerous in proportion to the secrecy and silence in which it has been involved.

M. STUART.

We fully concur with the above.

L. WOODS.

R. EMERSON.

The following was added by Dr. Woods—

P. S. Would it not be important for teachers of youth in Colleges and Academies, to recommend the above-named pamphlet to their pupils, and to adopt measures to circulate it among them?

From Clergymen of Lowell.

LOWELL, AUG. 2, 1841.

We concur most fully with the sentiments expressed by Rev. Professor Stuart in his recommendation of "Facts," &c.—

A. BLANCHARD, N. THURSTON, O. SCOTT,
J. BALLARD, U. C. BURNAP, W. H. BREWSTER.

From Professor Finney of Oberlin, Ohio.

I have read the first edition of this pamphlet, and from many facts that have come to my knowledge upon the subject of which it treats, I am deeply impressed with the conviction, that information upon this subject is greatly needed, and that the general diffusion of knowledge in respect to this vice, would result in incalculable good.—May the Lord speed my Br. in his undertaking.

BOSTON, 16th. Nov. 1841.

C. G. FINNEY.

From L. COLEMAN, Principal of the Teachers Seminary, Messrs. GRAY and WELLS, Associate Instructors; and S. H. TAYLOR, Principal of Phillips Academy, Andover.

We, the undersigned, have examined a small work entitled "Facts," &c., and consider it well adapted to awaken attention to the subject of which it treats. It exposes an insidious vice which is exceedingly injurious in its effects upon health, mental vigor, and moral purity. We commend the pamphlet to the attention of parents and teachers, as well as to the young themselves.

L. COLEMAN,
S. H. TAYLOR,

A. GRAY,
W. H. WELLS.

ANDOVER, AUG. 12, 1841.

[For other Recommendations, see cover.]

FACTS AND INFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

Most of the bodily sufferings endured by mankind are penalties for violated physical law; and as in the civil code, so in the economy of health, "ignorance of the law excuses no one." Although Nature may not always inflict the penalty immediately on the act of transgression, yet she keeps a most rigid record of all violations and delinquences, and will sooner or later bring the transgressor to a fearful reckoning.

It is a humiliating thought, that, instead of seeking enjoyment in the exercise of their moral and intellectual faculties, that part of their being which makes them akin to Angels and to Deity, the lords of creation should prefer to obtain their pleasures in the gratification of propensities possessed by themselves in common with the irrational brute. The appetite for food, given for nutrition and the preservation of a sound body as the

abode of a vigorous mind, is perverted to gluttony and drunkenness. The function of reproduction, necessary for the perpetuity of organized beings, is abused to the lowest purposes of social and solitary licentiousness. The abuse of the nutritive system—the stomach and digestive organs—and the hideous train of ills that accompany it, have been a prolific theme for popular lectures and published volumes. Individuals and the public are strongly enlisted to put down the evils of intemperance in the use of intoxicating drinks; but here is as deadly a foe insidiously preying upon the vigor, happiness and virtue of community, scarcely noticed or molested. A few philanthropists have indeed had the moral courage to speak out on the subject, and raise their warning voice against this invisible scourge.

When this subject first began to be discussed, many virtuous people predicted immense harm from publishing information on a subject so delicate and difficult to deal with. It was asserted that youth, yet pure and uninstructed in vice, would be initiated in practices with which they were before unacquainted. As some such persons are to be met with now, and as all conscientious scruples and plausible objections demand regard, let us notice the above. The objection supposes, first, that youth can be kept in ignorance

of this habit; and, second, that such ignorance is the greatest safeguard of virtue; neither of which is true, as I shall endeavor to show. To preserve children uncontaminated, even to the age of puberty, parents would need to shut them entirely from the world, which is impossible. They must come in contact with vice, unless society becomes purer than it is at present.

“Those who hold to these opinions,” says Dr. Woodward, the experienced superintendent of the Worcester Hospital, “are hardly aware how extensively known the habit is with the young, and how early in life it is sometimes practiced. I have never conversed with a lad of twelve years of age, who did not know all about the practice, and understand the language commonly used to describe it.” Again in the Fifth Annual Report of that Institution, speaking of masturbation, he says:—“No effectual means can be adopted to prevent the devastation of mind and body, and the debasement of moral principle, from this cause, till the whole subject is well understood and properly appreciated by parents and instructors, as well as by the young themselves.”

The following, from the “Annals of Education,” is the opinion of Wm. C. Woodbridge, well known as the friend of youth, and a successful laborer in the cause of education. He speaks of it as “a

topic in physiology which 'artificial modesty' has covered up, until a solitary, but fatal vice is spreading desolation through our *schools* and *families*, unnoticed or unknown. The experience of teachers, the case-books of physicians, and the painful exposures which accident, or the dreadful diseases which follow in its train, have occasionally produced, have at length forced it upon public attention; and we hope it will not again be forgotten. We would warn them, (parents and teachers,) that those who have been most confident of the safety of their charge, have often been most deceived; and that the youthful bashfulness which seems to shrink from the bare mention of the subject, is *sometimes* the blush of shame for concealed crime. We feel bound to add, what abundant and decisive evidence has shown, that ignorance on this subject is no protection from the vice; nay, that it is often the original cause or encouragement of it; that it gives tenfold power to the evil example and influence which are so rarely escaped."

Ignorance must be, at best, a very uncertain safeguard; an accident may destroy it, and leave the blind victim a prey to propensities unrestrained by enlightened reason.

Mr. Combe, in his work on "The Constitution of Man," remarks as follows: "The organ of Am-

ativeness is the largest of the whole mental organs; and being endowed with natural activity, it fills the mind spontaneously with emotions and suggestions, the outward manifestations of which may be directed, controled, and resisted, by intellect and moral sentiment, but which cannot be prevented from arising, or eradicated after they exist. The whole question, therefore, resolves itself into this, whether it is more beneficial to enlighten the understanding, so as to dispose and enable it to control and direct that feeling; or (under the influence of an error in philosophy, and false delicacy founded on it) to permit it to riot in all the fierceness of a blind animal instinct, withdrawn from the eye of reason, but not thereby deprived of its vehemence and importunity? The former course appears to me to be the only one consistent with reason and morality; and I shall adopt it in reliance on the good sense of my readers, that they will at once discriminate between practical instruction concerning this feeling addressed to the intellect, and lascivious representations addressed to the propensity itself; with the latter of which the enemies of all improvement may attempt to confound my observations. Every function of the mind and body is instituted by the Creator; each has a legitimate sphere of activity; but all may be abused; and it is impossible regu

larly to avoid the abuse of them, except by being instructed in their nature, objects and relations. This instruction ought to be addressed exclusively to the intellect; and, when it is so, it is science of the most beneficial description."

This is the correct view of the subject, and the error is, that instead of considering it in this light, most people have associated it in their minds with nothing but lasciviousness and obscenity; and consequently, instead of enlightening the minds of the young and guarding them against pernicious and fatal habits, their education in this respect is left in the hands of the lewd and corrupt. But fortunately a change is taking place in public opinion. The plan of diffusing information is approved by those who are the guardians of virtue and morality. I have conversed with numerous clergymen, teachers, and physicians in relation to the matter, and have usually found them strongly impressed with its importance. One clergyman observed, that he felt particularly interested, as a friend of his was made an inmate of an insane hospital by the effect of this secret vice. I know of some very successful and experienced teachers who are in the habit of introducing the subject to their pupils in the school room. At first, they remark, some impure-minded lads will manifest uneasiness, but they soon learn to listen to instruc-

tion on the organs and instincts of the body, as on any other subject.

It may be asked, why lay so much stress on this particular species of sensuality, and say nothing of the more demoralizing and debasing sin of promiscuous licentiousness? The reasons are these. In regard to the latter, the public are constantly instructed. The young and virtuous are taught to contemplate it with horror.

It is mostly confined to the worthless and abandoned, and to the sinks of our cities; and to this public immorality and licentiousness, a certain and speedy curse has been attached, to deter, as it would seem, those who neither fear God nor regard man.

Solitary vice is the source of social vice. If individuals were chaste in self-intercourse, they would also be, as members of society. But by this private education of the propensities, this secret dalliance with lust, the individual, before he is aware, raises up the polluted tyrant to rule over him. The passions rage like the fires of a volcano, and the helpless, hapless wretch breaks through the restraints of moral principle and the customs of society, and in the face of misery and death even, abandons himself to reckless debauchery. There is no doubt that this cause has done much to furnish inmates and patrons for houses of ill-

fame, as well as to crowd the walls of our insane hospitals.

Numberless circumstances concur to prevent illicit intercourse, while solitary indulgence is restrained by no limits. It is "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday." It is not confined to the obscure and the vicious, but pervades all classes of society. "In my opinion," says a French writer, "neither the plague, nor war, nor small-pox, nor similar diseases, have produced results so disastrous to humanity as the pernicious habit of Onanism; it is the destroying element of civilized societies, which is constantly in action, and gradually undermines the health of a nation."

"A system of concealment on this subject," says Dr. Alexander Walker, "is quite impracticable. Parents or instructors ought, therefore, at this critical period, to give rational explanations as to the nature and object of this propensity, and the fatal consequences to which it may lead."

"Such a procedure, if well conducted, cannot but have the most beneficial results; because, in order that a sane person should avoid any danger, it is only necessary that he should see it distinctly."

And yet many think youth safer under the control of a blind instinct than of enlightened reason.

The following valuable communication is from Rev. Mr. WELLS, the very successful and experienced Teacher of the School for Moral Discipline, Boston. In the past twelve years he has had nearly as many hundred boys under his instruction and management.

SCHOOL FOR MORAL DISCIPLINE, }
BOSTON, *October 15, 1841.* }

SIR:—You request me to write you something commendatory of a work you are about publishing, an enlargement—if I understand you—of your present work, “Facts,” &c.

I have generally a strong objection to publications on this subject—not that they are not needed—but because (me judice) most that I have seen are calculated to increase the very practice they are intended to correct. They appear to me not to be written (if negatively not positively) with a perfect purity of mind. Dr. Woodward’s I have never seen, nor those of a more recent date. Indeed, I have been so disgusted with such works, that I have ceased to read them, and I never put them into the hands of my pupils, preferring (if you will pardon the vanity,) my own mode of addressing them. Your work will, I trust, prove an exception to the very general character of such works. I say *trust*, for I have not read even your little work, your haste requiring me to occupy my first leisure hour in writing this article. But the recommen-

dation of Dr. Woods and Professor Stuart, which I see appended to it, being a sufficient guarantee to my mind of its pure moral tendency, I wish you therefore, great success in your present enlarged undertaking.

Respecting the habit of sexual self-indulgence, I should hope it was unnecessary to speak of its dangerous and evil effects; but the greatness of the danger is enhanced by its not being known to be an evil. Thousands of amiable and pure-minded boys and young men are undermining their physical constitution, and prospectively corrupting their souls by a pleasurable, and, to many of them, innocent gratification. Often—often have I seen the ingenuous expression of astonishment mantle over the countenance on being informed of the always dangerous and often melancholy effects of this habit. Now, why is this so? We teach the young of the danger of intemperance—of gambling—of social sexual indulgence, &c., &c., but of this, to which there is certain exposure and danger, and the evils of which are not less disastrous than any other, we, with but too few exceptions, leave our unsuspecting charge entirely in the dark. Here allow me to ask parents if they do their duty while they neglect to teach their innocent children the danger to which they are unconsciously exposed from this source? Will you,

parents, place within the reach of those to whom you have given, under God, an unending existence, poisonous—dangerous sweets—without warning them of the danger? or will you leave them exposed to secret, destructive fires without furnishing them the means of security? Is this parental love? and wherefore? Are you ashamed? Alas! of what? to speak to your pure-minded child of the virtuous control of a passion in itself pure, implanted in you—in them—in us all—by one Father, and by the virtuous indulgence of which you have brought into existence these very objects of your gentlest affections? If there is shame here, “the dirt is in your own mind.”

A few words on the manner of instruction and correction. Use not a cold, forbidding, morose manner. Be gentle, affectionate, and earnest. Be not formal, but as simple as you would on any other subject. If it must be done at all, do not punish nor censure an act as a crime, until knowledge has made it such; for, “where there is no (known moral) law, there is no transgression.” Use great delicacy; true, not false delicacy, with the most perfect and easy familiarity—as you would give your child medicine. Beware of exciting shame, at least till other measures have failed, and the subject has degraded himself by known and wilful excess. A blush *may be* a criterion of poor

human virtue, but if so, it is of a low order. Angels, I fancy, never blush, for shame is the child of sin.

Very respectfully,

E. M. P. WELLS.

Dr. Andrew Combe, after giving statistics, which show a comparatively large number of deaths, between the ages of 15 and 20, and a double upon this fearful mortality between the ages of 20 and 25, says: "These tables, confirmed by others drawn up with equal accuracy, place in a striking point of view the dangers of the state of transition from youth to manhood, and the necessity of attempting, by early influence and timely prudence, to protect the young against the numerous causes of disease which then come in active and fatal operation.

"The young being left in ignorance, heedlessly give way to their predominant inclinations, and the body being weak at that age from the rapidity of growth and want of consolidation, external causes act with double energy, and lay the foundation of consumption and other forms of disease."

CHAPTER II.

FACTS AND INFORMATION.

FACTS FROM A HOSPITAL. *Sept. 21, 1841.*—Called at one of our New England Insane Hospitals, and by the kindness of the gentlemanly Superintendent, I was taken over the establishment and shown some of its wretched inmates. Among these were pointed out a number who had been brought there by the effects of Masturbation, of whom the Superintendent informed me, there were 20 or 25 in the institution at the time. He remarked also, that persons of all professions and classes of society were among the victims of this habit.

Connected with the Hospital there is a spacious green enclosed by a high fence, where the insane are permitted to take exercise and the fresh air in pleasant weather. In this yard were ten or fifteen persons, most of whom had become insane by this indulgence. One of these, a man of bloodless countenance and vacant gaze, was promenading

back and forth as fast as his feeble limbs could bear him. This man was educated at one of our first literary institutions, and was a member of one of the learned professions. O, how fallen, from the talented and accomplished young man he once was!

Another degraded and ghostly looking object had also been an active and intelligent professional gentleman. Others there were, companions in degradation—once promising young men, now like the unreasoning brute, except in form alone. Instead of the speaking eye and intellectual countenance, their sombre brows, their haggard and wo-begone faces, cast around them a gloom that might almost be felt. It rendered the place truly horrible, and reminded us that we were among the living-dead.

I will not draw the veil to disclose the revolting scenes presented by those who are wholly abandoned to their vicious habit, and who have neither shame nor reason left to restrain their disgusting indulgence. Would, that every lad and young man might take one view, such as may be seen in this and every other hospital. It must surely leave an impression never to be effaced. When tempted to this fatal vice, he would read in characters horrid as if traced by the skeleton finger of death—**BEWARE.**

Opinion of DR. ADAM CLARKE.

The sin of *self-pollution* is one of the most destructive evils ever practiced by fallen man. In many respects it is several degrees worse than common whoredom, and has in its train more awful consequences. It excites the powers of nature to *undue action*, and produces *violent secretions*, which necessarily and speedily *exhaust the vital principle and energy*; hence the muscles become flaccid and feeble, the tone and natural action of the nerves relaxed and impeded, the understanding confused, the memory oblivious, the judgment perverted, the will indeterminate and wholly without energy to resist; the eyes appear languishing and without expression, and the countenance vacant; *appetite ceases*, for the stomach is incapable of performing its proper office; *nutrition fails*, tremors, fears, and terrors are generated; and thus the wretched victim drags out a most miserable existence, till *superannuated*, even before he had time to arrive at *man's estate*, with a mind often debilitated even to a state of idiotism, his worthless body tumbles into the grave, and his guilty soul (guilty of self-murder,) is hurried into the awful presence of its Judge!

Reader, this is no caricature, nor are the colorings overcharged in this shocking picture. Worse

woes than my pen can relate I have witnessed in those addicted to this fascinating, unnatural, and most destructive of crimes. If thou hast entered into the snare, flee from the destruction both of body and soul that awaits thee! God alone can save thee. Advice, warnings, threatenings, increasing debility of body, mental decay, checks of conscience, expostulations of judgment and medical assistance, will all be lost on thee: God, and God *alone*, can save thee from an evil which has in its issue the destruction of thy body, and the final perdition of thy soul!

Communication from O. S. FOWLER, Phrenologist.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 8, 1841.

MR. G.—DEAR SIR:—Your letter and book are received. I am right *glad* you have taken hold of this subject. Much as reform is needed in other matters, no reform, no, not even that in reference to alcoholic drinks, is demanded half so much as in reference to this solitary vice. To this conclusion, my practice, which you know has not been limited, and my means of information, which have been varied and extensive, have led me, reluctantly but inevitably. And, what is most deplorable, unlike other forms of vice which prey most upon the coarse and the vulgar, this is even more likely to attack those of fine feelings and ardent tempe-

raments, and otherwise unblemished morals.—They are not aware that this is one of the greatest sins they can commit.

I have of late seen this evil to be so alarming, and its ravages on the intellect and morals and health, so fearful, that I have contemplated preparing a work on the phrenological organ of Amativeness, to consist mainly of the physiological, intellectual and moral effects of this vice; but I rejoice that you are before me in this matter.

I could give you a vast number of facts that have come to my knowledge. A few days ago, a young man, who had been a *gentleman*, called upon me, in a state of mind and body truly wretched—the mere wreck of a man. His head was affected and painful, the back part of it in particular, and his mind was literally distracted with those horrors which this indulgence always induces. His mind was flighty, his powers of volition prostrated, his appetite destroyed, and the tones of his voice the very personification of grief.—Both his head and his conversation leave evidence of superior talents in ruins. Fifty times in the course of an hour, did he exclaim, “O, my God, what shall I do! I am mad, I know it. What can I do!”

In laying open his case, in order that I might give him advice, he mentioned his having been

much addicted to this habit, and would often bring his hands to these parts—an invariable sign of their being in a fevered state, either by secret indulgence, or indulgence with the other sex. His anxiety was, to escape the mad-house and regain self-control; the loss of which he most deplored, because on this he had always prided himself. On inquiring of him as to the prevalence of this evil, he said that nine-tenths of his acquaintances were given to it.

On inquiring of one of the physicians in Blockley Alms House, Philadelphia, as to the number of its inmates who were brought into the insane department by its instrumentality, he started at once upon his feet, and spoke with great energy and emphasis of its influence in inducing derangement, and narrated several very interesting cases. In my visit to that institution a few days ago, I saw several insane patients who were brought there by this vice, and whose hands were tied to prevent self-pollution.

If it is facts that you want, I assure you they exist in abundance in every degree of aggravation. Let the young be warned, for most of its victims become so *ignorantly*. Let us have light, especially in our *institutions of learning*; because there, the absence of exercise, the seclusion from female society, and the character of their studies,

especially those that cultivate (vitate) the imagination, all tend to induce and increase the evil.

Were it not for protracting this communication, I would present a method of cure pointed out by physiology and phrenology, by which the victims of the vice may obtain deliverance with comparative ease. It is by physical exercise, by the cold bath, and by abstaining from every article of diet that is stimulating, such as tea, coffee, tobacco, snuff, flesh, &c. &c., and by using a *vegetable* diet, and that but moderately. This vice is highly inflammatory, and the inflammation it creates must have a channel of escape. That channel must be one of two; first, through the muscles, in physical exercise and cold bathing, (the best means to be found, for reducing inflammation, fever, &c.,) or, second, through the *animal propensities*. In my lecture on Intemperance founded upon phrenology and physiology, I have shown the reciprocal relation that exists between the body and the *base* of the brain, or the organs of the animal propensities; and therefore, that whatever excites either of these, excites the other also. In accordance with this principle, this vice, which consists of the exercise of Amativeness, by powerfully stimulating this organ, also excites the other animal organs and the whole nervous system; this reacts upon these animal propensities, to inflame them, and this addi-

tional stimulus again redoubles the activity of the animal propensities, until the climax of excitement ends in derangement, and is followed by a perfect prostration of the nervous system, and by mental imbecility. This principle explains the fact, that no vice grows upon a man like this, or conquers him with equal celerity. Its work is short, but dreadful.

May success crown your efforts at reform. Yet remember, you little know the storm your philanthropic efforts, in this department of humanity, will inevitably bring down upon your head. Gird yourself, therefore, with moral courage, and let your course be judicious, though energetic, and your motive be moral purity and the good of mankind.

Yours, truly,

O. S. FOWLER.

Case given by a Physician in Providence, R. I.

In October, 1840, I was called to a family of which I was the family physician. A lad of fifteen was sick, melancholy, retiring. On entering the room, he wished me to close the window shutters. On consultation, his mother said she feared he practiced self-pollution, and wished me to converse with him. I hinted the subject to him and told him he must resolve to do nothing which his judgment said was wrong. He abandoned his

habit and soon recovered his health. An incident showed the effect of this practice on his feelings. One day his mother wished him to ride out. But he excused himself by saying he was pale; had lost his flesh, and every body would *look* at him.

Dr. J. A. BROWN, of Providence, in a letter upon this subject thus remarks: "That it is an evil of vast magnitude, no physician who has been in the habit of tracing *effects* to *causes* can for a moment doubt. I, sir, could tell of hundreds who labor under incurable maladies, produced by this practice, and I do not believe that I have a better faculty for obtaining such information than many others, who are, and will be dumb on this subject."

Letter from another Physician, dated

WEST KILLINGLY, (CT.) Dec. 22, 1840.

Mr. G., Sir:—I send you a brief account of the case of Masturbation of Mr.——, whom I mentioned to you.

The symptoms, as nearly as I can recollect, were as follows,—constant daily emissions; pain in the limbs and joints; great general prostration; extreme and long-continued pain in the back.

[Then follows, in the letter, a description which shows the individual to have been in the most distressing, degraded and horrible condition.]

This train of symptoms continued for months, until all the people in the region, were worn out by watching with him.

I forward you also, the letter and statement of Dr. Hutchins.

Respectfully Yours,

WM. A. BREWSTER.

Extract from Dr. H's letter, dated

BROOKLYN, Dec. 19, 1840.

“In my own practice I think I have seen the following results of masturbation,—involuntary emissions, prostration of strength, paralysis of the limbs, hysteria, epilepsy, strange nervous affections, dyspepsia, hypochondria, spinal disease, pain and weakness in the back and limbs, costiveness—and in fine, the long and dismal array of gastric, enteric, nervous and spinal affections, that are so complicated and difficult to manage.”

Dr. Alcott remarks, in the Library of Health,—“We believe that there is not a town in New England, whose bills of mortality, from year to year, are not greatly increased by this fearful and wide-wasting scourge. We believe that a majority of our diseases and infirmities—our aches, our pains, and our deformities too—after the age of puberty, are either induced or aggravated in this way. Believe it, did we say? Would to Heaven this expression were as strong as the nature of the

case and the character of the facts warrant. We *know* it is so, as well as we know any thing of mathematical demonstration, or the actual testimony of our senses."

A correspondent of the Library of Health writes as follows: "Now, Mr. Editor, I hold in my hand a list of names, dates, and facts, showing incontestibly that from a church of 250 members, there have been buried, within a few months, ten persons between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two years. Had these persons been destroyed by cholera or fever, in the same length of time, the whole population would have aroused to the danger, but as it is, nothing is said or done to avert this terrible scourge, which is undermining the health, and in some measure destroying the happiness of nearly every family in this place—embodying a population of about 1200 souls."

"That the evil is wide-spread and exceedingly injurious," says Dr. Woodward, "cannot be denied or doubted. A great number of the ills which come upon the young at and after the age of puberty, arise from this habit, persisted in, so as to waste the vital energies and enervate the physical and mental powers of man.

"Nature designs that this drain upon the system should be reserved to mature age, and even then that it be made but sparingly. Sturdy man-

hood in all its vigor, loses its energy and bends under the too frequent expenditure of this important secretion; and no age or condition will protect a man from the danger of unlimited indulgence, legally and naturally exercised.

“In the young, however, its influence is much more seriously felt; and even those who have indulged so cautiously as not to break down the health or the mind, cannot know how much their physical energy, mental vigor, and moral purity, have been affected by the indulgence.

“No cause is more influential in producing insanity. The records of the institutions give an appalling catalogue of cases attributed to it.”

“Masturbation, this scourge of the human race,” says the superintendent of a French Hospital, “is more frequently than is imagined, the cause of insanity, particularly among the rich.”

At the McLean Asylum, Charlestown, out of 128 males there in 1838, the disease of 24 was attributed to this cause.

In the Report of the Worcester Hospital, for 1836, among the causes of insanity, intemperance stands first, masturbation second or third; and to this cause are put down 26 cases.

In the Report of the same institution, for 1838, out of 199 male patients, 42 are considered victims of Masturbation.

CHAPTER III.

FACTS AND INFORMATION.

*Communication from A. B. SNOW, M. D.
of Boston.*

DEAR SIR:—Self-pollution is undoubtedly one of the most common causes of ill health that can be found among the young men of this country. From the observations that I have been able to make, I am satisfied that the practice is almost universal. Boys commence it at a very early age, and the habit once formed, like that of intemperance, becomes almost unconquerable. In boarding schools and colleges, it obtains oftentimes without an exception. Hence the many sickly students, and the many young men of the most brilliant and promising talents, who have broken their constitution and ruined their health, as it is said, “by hard study!”

The immediate effects of the practice are general prostration of the whole nervous system, and subsequently general debility of the whole body. Then comes derangement of the functions; such

as loss of appetite, indigestion, costiveness or else diarrhœa, difficulty in the secretion and passage of the urine, and a morbid state of the secretions generally; consequently the growth of the body is checked before it arrives at maturity. Irregular sleep with frightful dreams supervenes, and sadness, sighing and weeping, palpitations, fainting fits, and often idiocy result from the continued habit. These are generally accompanied by the most acute pains in the head, limbs, joints, especially the wrists, and the most extreme tenderness upon pressure on every part of the body. Pimples appear on the face and thighs; the sight and hearing become deranged, the hands become tremulous, the knees weak, and the whole muscular system, flaccid.

The habit has also, sometimes, produced the most excruciating and obstinate piles, so that after every act of self-pollution, blood and fetid matter have been discharged from the intestines, attended of course with very great pain. The organs of generation are affected in a greater or less degree. Sometimes they become swollen, irritable and excessively painful. At other times they seem to lose all strength, and the individual becomes *impotent*; in either case, involuntary emissions are produced by thoughts, dreams, and the slightest irritations, even the common evacuations

of the bowels. These emissions are so frequent in some cases, as to form almost a constant discharge, and in repeated instances have been mistaken for a venereal disease. In such cases the powers of the organs are prostrated and the individuals are marked by perfect imbecility. These wrecks of humanity generally close the scene of their miserable and loathsome existence either as raving maniacs or as epileptic idiots.

All these symptoms appear of course only in extreme cases ; but they obtain *more or less* in every case. The least indulgence in solitary vice, is injurious in the way mentioned above, just so far as that indulgence is carried, and the only ground of safety is, ENTIRE ABSTINENCE.

But I have said that the habit is almost universal, and referred to schools and colleges. In these places it can hardly be called a *solitary* vice. It has become so common that it is indeed a *public* vice. In the secluded haunts of the country, the farmer boys will hide themselves and practice this odious crime—sometimes alone, and often several will congregate together for the purpose. It is not unfrequently the case that small boys are first instructed in the practice, by young men while at work in distant fields, or while sleeping together in the same bed ; for it is a notorious fact, that young men, and middle aged men, gentlemen and

loafers, are all to a great extent guilty of this nasty and loathsome habit. Professors of religion do not always prove an exception, and many a youth has been seduced into the practice, by those who have, by a public profession, most solemnly promised that they will forsake the carnal mind and the lusts of the flesh, and the devil with all his works.

Innumerable cases are on record, which prove the truth of what I have stated. Our daily experience also confirms it. I have recently received a letter from a former patient of mine, which is in proof, and which I will give entire.

*Dear Sir :—*I have waited a long time without making you acquainted with the progress of my sickness, and my subsequent restoration from a disease, for which, for a long time I received your medical aid.

You are aware that I was greatly debilitated and emaciated, troubled with pains in my head, limbs, joints, &c., had palpitation of the heart, indigestion, and a dry hectic cough and fever. I was then ignorant of the *cause* of my sickness, and notwithstanding your strong hints by way of denouncing “excessive sexual intercourse and any other practice that produced a like prostration,” I continued in the disgusting practice, which, I am now satisfied, was the cause of all my troubles.

The book you left me has opened my eyes, and I thank you for advising me to read it. I have derived much practical benefit from it already, and deep sorrow has filled my mind when I have seen how much I have abused myself.

My history and course have been singularly unwise and criminal in this respect. I had never read any book on the subject of "solitary vice" as it is called, till since this time sick; consequently my ideas on the subject were as vague as they were few—and from the fact that I had been told by those whom I supposed knew, that the occasional practice of this *vice* was beneficial, I took it for granted that it was true, and felt very contented to continue it. Yes, sir, in my boyhood this vicious habit was taught me by precept and example too, by young men, some of whom were professing christians. It has also been taught me by middle aged men, and those from whom I had a right to expect better instruction. On one occasion I consulted a doctor, (I am happy in being able to say however, that he was a notorious quack) and he told me that it was a "healthy operation," and of course, having at that time confidence in him, I continued the practice. Before I was eight years old, I was instructed in the habit by a man who worked on my father's farm and slept with me. When I was fifteen, I recollect well, in the

neighborhood of an academy, a student enforced the example to such an extent, that I increased the practice to an alarming degree. At twenty-two and three, I was seriously ill, and saw my error faintly. I was then so much addicted to the habit, that I often found myself practicing it in my sleep ; and to prevent it, tied my hands when I went to bed. Thus I went on till I became prostrated and helpless, and sent for you. You doubtless remember how I then appeared. My constitution broken down, my nerves shattered, my organs and functions all deranged, my memory gone, and I myself almost an idiot.

But I have great reason to be thankful that I have seen the error of my ways so fully, that I have been enabled in some measure to mend them. I think so far as the habit is concerned, I have conquered it. It is now over a year since I commenced the reformation. My health is not yet wholly restored, but it is much improved, and I am confident that in time, if I persevere, I shall repair the waste of my constitution, which has been made by my own criminal imprudence ; though the consciousness and remembrance of having spent so much of my life in so disgusting a manner, will always be a blight upon my happiness.

But I am not alone even here in this country town. Only last Sabbath, I saw a young man in

church, far advanced, as his physician said, in *consumption* ! I resolved that I would visit him ; I did so, and took him one side and charged him with being in the habitual practice of *solitary vice*. After awhile he admitted that it was a fact, and I am, and he too is now satisfied, that this vice has been the sole cause of his sickness. I fear, however, that it is too late for him to regain his health ; still he will make the trial. I know also of nine other young men in this small village, who are sickly, and in my opinion are suffering from the same cause. I have resolved to call on them and do my duty, let what will be the consequence.

Thus much have I said to relieve my own broken and repentant spirit, and at the same time, be the means perhaps of exciting you to be more plain in your professional intercourse with, and advice to young men. I hope I have not overstepped the bounds of courtesy and respect which is due to you as my senior and as a physician ; if so, I can only say that my motive has been good, and that must be my apology. Yours, &c.

This is only one letter out of a great number which might be produced of a similar character. But as this communication is already long, I refrain from giving any more at this time. I will however mention one other case that has come within my observation.

I knew a young gentleman about seven years ago, of the first respectability in society, and whose amiable qualities had gained for him the love of all his acquaintances. He was promoted to an important post of honor, which he continued to fill to the satisfaction of his constituents. He had already accumulated considerable wealth, and his prospects were brightening every day. He was also betrothed to a beautiful and interesting young lady, and with proper care of *himself*, might this day be occupying one of the most enviable situations in the country. But his health began to fail. His constant complaint was — ‘my nerves are weak’ — ‘my hands tremble’ — ‘my wrists ache’ — ‘my knees are weak’ — ‘I have bad dreams,’ &c. He was advised to take out-door exercise, ride horse-back, and take strengthening remedies with a nourishing diet. But all this did no good. The symptoms increased. He soon became dyspeptic and a hypochondriac, and then followed, not only the aches and pains that were consequent upon such a state of the body, but all those ten thousand imaginary physical and mental diseases that flesh is heir to. Every remedy was used, but to no purpose. He gave up his business, broke off his engagement with his lady, sought every opportunity to hide himself from the gaze of his friends and the world, and seemed to be determined to die.

Thus he remained, a most wretched devotee to the suicidal practice of Onanism, or self-pollution. Professional advice and that of his friends, who knew the cause of his sickness, had no effect upon him. Sometimes, indeed, he would desist for a few days, but it seemed to be only to gather new strength, that he might pursue his ruinous career with greater energy. About two years ago, he was attacked with palsy of the whole of one side, and which continues to this day. Nocturnal emissions, priapisms, gleet or a watery discharge from the penis, and aches and pains, with frightful visions, horrid dreams and idiotic manners, all now present themselves as the sad result of this disgusting, criminal and soul-destroying habit. He is now a mere pest to his friends, and though but comparatively few persons are aware of the cause of his wretchedness, it is nevertheless true, and can be attributed to none other than the indulgence in solitary vice.

Other cases might be referred to, if I had time, of a less revolting nature; for when the indulgence is only occasional, of course the effects are not so alarming. But even *then* the effects are bad—for there cannot be a single indulgence in this way, without producing injury to a certain extent. Hence the necessity on the part of parents,

guardians, and teachers, of the most critical examinations into the private habits of the youth under their care ; and of the most rigid regard for their books and their associates.

It is probable that the time, when the greatest temptation is presented to indulge in this practice, is in the morning, before the individuals arise from their beds, especially if they remain a while after waking from their sleep. Hence then the necessity of enforcing the healthful practice among boys, of rising immediately after their first sleep is over, without waiting to get a second nap. I wish to impress this last idea upon the minds of all young men and boys. No person feels so well by lying a-while after he first wakes. If he does not fall into a sound sleep again, he is very sure to fall half asleep, when the mind becomes dreamy, the passions are let loose, the sexual organs become stimulated, and the whole system, having lost the control of the *will*, is given up to the sensual feelings which predominate, and the result is, either involuntary pollution or onanism. Whereas, if he rises immediately after waking the first time, before the mind and the system fall into this lethargic state, this offensive and dangerous result will be avoided.

Of other times and places and circumstances

which tend to create and foster this loathsome habit, I have not time now to speak. Perhaps on some future occasion, it may be thought advisable to enter, more in detail, into a preventive and remedial course.

BOSTON, Nov. 10, 1841.

Dr. S. intimates that the habit is very common in institutions of learning. Facts in proof of this will be given in the next chapter. But among what class of persons it *most* prevails, it is impossible to say. One physician writes that the evil is exceedingly prevalent, *especially in manufacturing villages*. I have several cases of mechanics. One writes from New Hampshire: "The experience of six years has taught me, that this indulgence was hurrying me to the grave with railroad speed.—From personal knowledge I know this to be an alarming evil in manufacturing towns."

A physician, of ten years' experience in his profession, gave it as his opinion, "that seven-eighths of the bodily ills and diseases of people are caused, or greatly aggravated by self-abuse or excessive legal indulgence."

"A few days ago," said one of the first physicians in Boston, "a young man called on me, in a most wretched condition caused by Masturbation, and so great was his desire to be freed from

the power of this habit, that he entreated me to emasculate him."

In travelling in a few towns in one small county of this state, I saw and heard of 25 or 30 persons who had ruined themselves by this cause. I might have probably found a great number of others, had I made particular inquiry. Many of those I saw had been at hospitals—one of them at two—and were pronounced incurable and sent home to be a burden and nuisance to their friends, or like useless *animals* to be *penned* and *kept* by the town.

Thus are the victims of this destroyer to be found all around us, and in our midst; and yet, these are only a few of the *extreme cases*, those that are *forced* upon our attention. How great, then, must be the multitude of sufferers in health and mental vigor—the weakly, the nervous, the melancholy, the stupid, those *unwell* or *out of health*,—between the first step in this tempting vice and the extreme verge of destruction, where the body is blighted, the reason dethroned, and immortal man reduced far beneath the brute, in degradation.

CHAPTER IV.

FACTS AND INFORMATION.

Facts in relation to Schools, Academies, and Colleges. In conversation with the President of one of our colleges, he remarked, that it was a very great evil, there was need of information, and he had requested a physician to bring the subject before the students in a lecture. He also remarked, that when he was a student, one of his classmates was notoriously addicted to this habit, and ruined himself by it.

The President of another college writes, that some efforts should be made to spread information on this subject, and that a few years since a pamphlet similar to this, was circulated among the students.

The President of another college, some months ago, procured a number of copies of a small work on this subject, to scatter among the young men of his institution.

A Teacher of a high school said, that a few years since, he entered a New England Universi-

ty ; and, being comparatively young, a gang of corrupt and unprincipled students used to get him into their rooms, lock the door, and absolutely compel him to take part with them in their abominable self-pollutions. Said he shuddered to think of what he had been through, was careful to look out for the mischief in his own school, and instruct and warn his pupils against the vice.

Dr. Rush remarks : " It is from the effects of indolence and sedentary habits, that the venereal appetite prevails with so much force, and with such odious consequences, within the walls of seminaries of learning."

Dr. Woodward, after giving the cases of several educated young men—graduates of colleges, and professional students, says, " I have purposely selected a class of most respectable individuals who have been the victims of this vice, because I believe that in our High Schools, Academies and Colleges, the evil is as alarming, or more so, than among an equal number of young men in any of the humbler walks of life."

A clergyman remarked, that while his son was attending an Academy in this State, one of the students became so abandoned to this debasing indulgence, that his filthy conduct became notorious to the whole school. No one could be prevailed on to ' room ' with him, nor would he desist

although admonished by the instructors. He died in about two years.

A Teacher of an Academy said, he observed that three of his pupils were becoming pale, sickly, dull, and unsuccessful in their studies. Knowing the effects of masturbation, and suspecting this might be the cause, he lent each of them a little work on the subject. They read and returned them. One of them, sometime after, came to him deeply affected, and attempted to speak to him. He encouraged him to go on; and at length the student referred to the book lent to him, and said, with tears and sobs, that he had reduced himself, to a dreadful state—he could neither sleep nor study, and wished to know what he must do.

A young man said, that while he was at an Academy in Vermont, one of the students, the son of a clergyman, became insane, and was sent to the Hospital, from this cause, it was believed.

Case by a Medical Student. “A school teacher,” said he, “was pale, feeble and irritable; was always complaining of low spirits and ill-health, but still continued his employment. After a time I noticed he looked much better, his countenance assumed a healthy appearance, and his nervous affection left him. I mentioned the circumstance to him, and as we were on terms of intimacy, and

being myself a little suspicious as to the cause of his former complaints, I asked him if he had not been reforming some of his habits, or to what cause he attributed his improved health? He smiled and handed me a little work on Masturbation and its effects, and replied, the perusal of THAT, is the cause of my uncommon health and improved appearance."

Letter from a Teacher.—July, 1841.

The following is from an eminent Teacher of an Academy in this State, one who has had above thirty years' experience in his employment.

MR. G.—DEAR SIR:—I send you a few facts that have come under my observation, in reference to the subject of which you spoke to me. I most cordially approve your design of spreading information before the community.

It is a matter of great astonishment to me, that the Christian public have been so inattentive to this subject. This solitary vice has, in my opinion, destroyed more souls and bodies of men than even intemperance itself. I have seen the horrid work it has made among the youth of my school and vicinity; and I have felt it my duty to address my pupils on the subject in such a manner as to be plainly understood.

A few years ago I had under my care and in-

struction a most promising youth. His talents were of the highest order, and he bid fair to take a prominent stand among the first scholars of our country. He entered college and was considered one of the first scholars of his class. It was soon perceived that his constitution was breaking down. Medicine did him but little good. Soon after he graduated, he became melancholy and finally was deranged, and his friends were under the necessity of conveying him to a hospital. It was not until this event that the cause of his complaint was ascertained. It was evident that he had been in the constant habit of criminally indulging himself in secret. In a few months he partially recovered and visited his friends. He has, however, been sent to the hospital again. He is a most melancholy object, for in his lucid moments he is demented, a mere wreck of that superior genius which he once was. When I meet him in the street, I find that idiot, lascivious smile, which is common in those cases where the individual has been in the constant habit of beastly indulgence.

A young man was under my care from one of the Southern cities. He was an object of pity; he had become so accustomed to his vicious indulgence that he has been known, even at the *dinner-table*, to practice it. He was exceedingly

irritable and would often be taken in a fit (spasms) which would continue for hours. His physician did not understand his case, nor was I sensible at the time, that his bad habits had produced his partial insanity. He would often disclose some of his practices to his associates, when he was insane, which he would much regret when he had recovered his reason. I have understood, that since his return to his friends, he has but partially recovered. He is demented and is unfit for the common avocations of life.

Another young man, who was under my care not long since, is obliged to leave his studies and is just going into a decline, and self-pollution is the cause. I have conversed with him, and he is sensible of his error, but I fear too late.

While our Patriots, Philanthropists, as well as Clergymen, are exclaiming against the prevailing sins of Intemperance, Sabbath-breaking, &c., rarely is one lifting his warning voice against this most odious, horrid and heaven-daring vice. I know of but one clergyman in this county, that has even hinted at it in the pulpit. And why should not this be referred to in the pulpit as well as fornication, whoredom and other vices? Parents and teachers must do more than they have done. I am very glad you have interested yourself in this cause. It is a subject of vast import-

ance, and I do hope a liberal public will repay you for your efforts.

If what I have hastily written will be of any service, you are at liberty to use it. When at leisure I can give you more particulars.

Yours, &c.

From a Student of Andover Theological Seminary, June, 1841.

While pursuing a course of study in one of our New England Colleges, connected with a class of about forty young men, I was informed by my room-mate, that he suspected several of the class of being addicted to solitary vice. His observations had given him some experience in the subject, and his suspicions were occasioned by the appearance of a few individuals in the class,—their sunken eyes, sickly looks, declining health and other symptoms. Upon his statement of the fact I could not give credit to his assertions. I was ignorant upon the subject, and could not believe that there were any in so respectable a class guilty of that sin, at least, to such an extent as he stated. But further developements of facts showed me my mistake. There was an evil at work, secretly, but gradually and effectually undermining the constitution and impairing the mind, which I little suspected. There were three in the class,

who upon judicious management, frankly confessed the fact. How many others there were, whose vice was known only to themselves and their Maker, I do not know."

The writer proceeds to give the particulars respecting two of the young men. They were far advanced in this frequented road to ruin, and were awakened just in season to save the health of the body and the powers of the mind from a total wreck. The cases are interesting, but space does not allow of their insertion.

From a Student of Harvard University.

CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 25, 1841.

*Dear Sir :—*You ask me for facts for the little work you are about to publish. I can only add my testimony to the terrible effects of solitary vice upon those addicted to it. I know that it prevails to a considerable extent; and that in many instances the nervous system is completely disordered, the eyes rendered incapable of service, the stomach made the prey of disease, and the mind, as well as the body, weakened and unfitted for the duties of a college life; and yet the unhappy individuals are entirely ignorant of the cause of their trouble. Thanks to Dr. Woodward of the Insane Hospital of Worcester, for the light he has given us. It has saved many.

But though so much has been written upon the subject within the last few years, the great fountain-head of the vice has hardly been mentioned; I allude to our common, country schools. To one who does not actually know the state of things, a true relation of facts would be incredible. I have seen in a summer school, the older scholars, from *seven* to *nine* years, close the door at noon time when the mistress was absent, and then indulge in the most lewd and lascivious conduct. Thus were bad passions stimulated and pernicious habits formed. Some of those scholars have paid the penalty in ruined health. I could mention several, who have been apparently in the last stages of consumption, and whose whole course of ill health renders it apparent that this dreadful vice was the foundation of it.

But I cannot give particulars. I can only add my warning to those parents and teachers who will read your book, and beg of them, by no means to believe that children can attend school more than one or two winters without acquiring an alarming amount of this kind of knowledge. Before I was six years old, I needed no interpreter to explain the conduct of the larger scholars. What an example to the younger members! And is it strange that they should imitate it? I can

tell from personal knowledge, that children of *seven years* do! I need add nothing more.

Students of our Academies and Colleges are awaking upon the subject, and it is to be hoped that ere long not one will remain ignorant or unwarned. Your book must do good; that it may, is the sincere wish of

Yours, &c.

X.

The writer of the above refers to Dr. Woodward's "Hints to the Young,"—an excellent little treatise on the subject, published by G. W. Light, Boston.

A Student of Yale College has furnished an interesting communication; but I can only insert a paragraph.

"I am aware," says he, "that the ill health of students is generally attributed to an honorable ambition for excellence and usefulness, and the consequent hard study and confinement, or, at worst, to the gentlemanly vices of luxury and idleness. Grant these causes their due share of influence, but still, upon all of them combined cannot be charged such havoc of hope, health and life, as is made by this invisible demon of lust, this secret curse that blights the body, debases the soul, unfits the mind for every great and noble

attainment, and prevents all usefulness and honorable distinction in society."

A Young Mechanic in a country town in Rhode Island, informed me, that when *five years old*, a laborer instructed him in the practice of self-abuse. All the boys in the neighborhood, as he afterwards learned, understood, and indulged in the habit; among the whole, about twenty in number, he did not think of a single exception. They were accustomed to retire to secluded places and practice it together. Nor was this all; the whole school where he attended, was contaminated, and yet all was conducted with so much concert and secrecy, that neither teacher nor parents feared or suspected evil! The consequence of this early conduct was, that his own health entirely failed before he was eighteen, and the youth of the neighborhood grew up feeble and sickly, and some of them made licentious young men.

If such is the state of things in our public schools, and the young, unwarned by kind words or books, or experience, are actually learning vice faster and more effectually than they learn to read and spell, what wonder, that they *continue* to cultivate this depraved appetite, and feed the fire that consumes their tender muscles, and nerves, and brain, and carry it with them to their farms and

shops and stores and academies and colleges and professional studies. What wonder, that so many fail of success, and are obliged to give up their business or their studies, on account of *ill health* in its various forms—head-ache, dizziness, weak eyes, disordered stomach, dyspepsia, shattered nerves, incipient consumption, general debility, and all the untold catalogue of maladies.

These things are a reproach to our defective systems of education, and demand the immediate attention of parents and teachers, and all interested in the education of youth from the primary school to the university.

Thus have I endeavored to present a few facts in relation to this subject as it actually exists, not among the uncivilized tribes of Asia or Africa, or in the licentious countries and cities of Europe, but in the enlightened, christian and *pure* society of New England.

This pamphlet might be swelled to a large volume, but it is believed it will be more useful in a cheap form for general circulation. It is hoped, moreover, that the disclosures here made will induce people to look around them and see whether the evil may not be doing its deadly work in their own neighborhoods and schools or families.

CHAPTER V.

PREVENTIVE AND RESTORATIVE MEASURES.

The first and principal step in preventing an evil is, *to expose it*; for, as Dr. Walker justly remarks, "in order that a sane person should avoid any danger, it is only necessary that he should see it distinctly." The mariner to avoid impending wreck, needs only to hear the cry, "Breakers ahead!" It is hoped that the perusal of the preceding pages will serve a similar purpose. A few additional hints will here be presented. The most important relate to the young.

Parents, guardians and instructors should use every precaution to preserve the purity of children and youth. The ways in which they become contaminated are various. Nurses have been known, by their manipulations to excite this propensity in infants. Says a writer on this subject, "a little boy, only eighteen months old, who had been put out to nurse, returned home with the habit of masturbation. When two years old, he had fits; but by confining his hands by night, and carefully

watching him by day, his fits left him, and he recovered."

Boys are frequently taught the practice by hired laborers and domestics. See cases on pages 35, 51 and 53. They are oftener taught by other boys of their own age, or older. Hence the need of precautions in regard to their associates and bed-fellows.

For the sake of the greater authority, I shall here and in other places in this chapter, quote from a highly valuable little treatise on this subject, entitled an "Hour's Conference," &c., by Dr. Bell, of Charlestown.

"It is a habit which, as far as I have learned, when it has proved ruinous, has usually been commenced, at a very early period of the sufferer's life frequently, incredible as it may appear, before he has arrived at the age of ten years. Hence, in placing a son at school, the parent should see, that beside a full communication, which either by book, or orally, should never be omitted, care should be taken to prevent the formation of such a habit from being encouraged by accidental circumstances. At boarding-houses, the large and small boys should, under no pretence, be allowed to sleep together. On no occasion should a boy be allowed to sleep with a favorite man-servant; if boys of the same age sleep together,—which after all I

apprehend is the best course in relation to this difficulty, for they will rather prove a check upon each other, if advised of its impropriety, and thus form a less hazardous arrangement than solitary seclusion,—let the person charged with their care, see that they retire and rise together at early hours, and that one does not linger in his bed after the other has arisen. I have often thought I should like to see the plan introduced into this country at boarding-schools, and boarding-houses for boys, at this most critical period of their lives, of having the lads sleep in long halls, in single beds, with an instructor or usher, or other supervisor, at one end on a higher bed, so as to overlook his charge, during the hours of getting to sleep and *getting awake*; and it should be part of his duty to see, *that every one laid with his arms above the bed covering*. The care of such a guide should also be vigilantly extended over them at other times, especially in their moments of retirement and privacy.”

But in spite of vigilance, the young will acquire the secret of others; or learn by instinct. “Many,” says Dr. Bell, “have informed me, that they have fallen into it of their own will, having received no intimation of the practice from any other person.” Hence the only safe course is, to give early instruction, and teach the young to love purity and virtue, and abhor vice.

There is abundant evidence that our public schools are prolific sources of this vice. And well they may be; for while it is handed down from one generation of school-boys to another, neither parents or teachers have ever told them it is wrong or injurious. If, instead of trying to make infant astronomers and philosophers and metaphysicians, the zealous patrons of public schools would introduce a few lessons in the science of the human system, and the physical laws necessary to be obeyed, to secure the health and the full development of the bodily and mental powers, they would do infinitely more for the cause of education and virtue and the public good.

Such information should be given in all academies, high schools and colleges; either by books adapted to the purpose, or by familiar lectures; nor should *this* most important topic of physiology be *bridged over*, nor couched in language so laboriously refined as not to be understood. If parents or instructors find it a difficult subject to introduce to the young, they can put into their hands some little work containing the necessary admonition and instruction in reference to the matter. Let it be known to be injurious, indecent and wrong, and shame would prevent lads, at least from disclosing this vile practice to each other.

Not only are the young exposed to danger from

the want of knowledge they do not have, but also by the knowledge they do acquire. "I fear," says Dr. Bell, "that in our system of education of youth, due caution is not had in training and restraining the imagination. Every library, public and private, every classic, every print-shop has something, prose, poetry or picture, which can be perverted,—if you choose so to consider what is a direct and natural result, a consequence following a cause,—to the base use of exciting the passions, and which is impressed into the service of pollution. Our whole literature, ancient and modern, if for no other reason than its natural tendency to administer to the depraved and vitiated tastes of our nature, demands expurgation."

It is important to ascertain whether the habit exists, *before* the manifest signs of disease appear; as then the constitution may be effectually undermined, and the seeds of disease and early death be implanted. But if it is not known whether the individual is addicted to the habit, let not parents be indifferent to the earliest symptoms.

"The indications," says Dr. Woodward, "by which parents and friends may be led to suspect this vice, are ill health, especially debility, paleness, with a down-cast look, and a disposition to retirement and seclusion, a jealousy and suspicion of those in whom they used to place confidence,

and who were former associates and friends. The individual becomes feeble, is unable to labor with accustomed vigor, or to apply his mind to study; his step is tardy and weak, he is dull, irresolute, engages in his sports with less energy than usual, and avoids social intercourse. I never see a pale, sickly lad from 15 to 20, especially if he be shy, shame-faced and retiring, but what I suspect him of this vice; and among a hundred that I have questioned, I have rarely been mistaken."

Let the community be enlightened on this subject and let the young know that if they indulge in this odious vice, the secret *will out*; and that not only their physicians, but their friends will know the shameful cause of their disease, and it will operate as a powerful restraint. It should be remarked, however, that these indications are not always infallible, and we should not form a hasty judgment.

On the other hand, disease may be preying upon the brain and nervous system, while the flesh, the countenance and the appetite indicate good health. In the later stages of the habit, its ravages are marked by more frightful symptoms; such as are enumerated in some of the cases before presented.

Predisposing causes should be removed. Let the diet and regimen be such as to prevent premature developement of the passions and all phys-

ical precocity. If children are brought up in an idle, effeminate and luxurious manner, their passions are, like tinder, ignited by the first spark that falls upon them. If the laws of physiology were obeyed, and external excitements removed, the sexual appetite would sleep on, as nature designed, till the transition from boyhood to manhood, instead of being forced into action at from five to ten years of age, as we have seen.

Dr. Rush says the exciting causes of the diseased appetite are, excessive eating, more especially of high seasoned animal food, intemperance in drinking and idleness. Hence, to allay the passion, he prescribes, a simple diet, abstinence from all strong drinks, constant employment in bodily labor or exercise, the cold bath, close application of the mind to business or study.

Milton, after speaking of the pure, ethereal flame of love, says, "As for that other burning, which is, but as it were, the venom of a lusty and overabounding concoction, strict life and labor, with the abatement of a full diet, may keep that low and obedient enough."

Benevolent individuals could not find a better field for their exertions. Intemperance does not so loudly call for their efforts or their pecuniary aid. Clergymen can do much to expose and check the vice, by treating it as they do other species of

licentiousness, and by encouraging the diffusion of knowledge on the subject. The interests of religion demand it of them. Physicians can exert great influence : humanity calls for it.

MEANS OF RESTORATION.

THE REMEDIES prescribed by the best medical authors, on this subject, are the following : *Total abstinence* from the voluntary practice is insisted on as indispensable, and in most cases it will effect a recovery without the aid of special means. But it often happens that the evil is continued in the form of involuntary emissions, in sleep. These are often dangerous and difficult to check. They arise from two causes, a polluted imagination, and a relaxed, debilitated and irritable state of the body, especially the parts most abused.

The mind is probably the exciting cause. In unsound sleep, the thoughts busy themselves with the libidinous images of the waking hours. Hence, *the mind must be purified* ; by watchfulness and perseverance, the thoughts may be restrained and turned from their wonted channel. To aid in this, check the first risings of impure ideas, and avoid every thing that may excite them—closely apply the mind to business or study and useful reading ; or engage in some absorbing subject, or enterprise in which self will be forgotten. Shun solitude,

seek the restraints of company ; lust evaporates in the presence of chaste and virtuous society. Avoid idleness, especially all vacuity of mind—"the idle man's brain is the Devil's work-shop."

If other motives fail to cure the voluntary practice, consider the dreadful consequences of continuing in it. "The whole system fallen to decay, all the bodily senses, all the faculties of the soul, weakened, loss of imagination and memory, imbecility, contempt, shame and ignominy are its constant attendants: all the functions disturbed, suspended and painful—capricious, disagreeable and disgusting, even to one's self;—violent pains ever renewing—all the disorders of old age in the prime of youth—and above all, the incapacity for all the functions for which *man* was created—lassitude, debility, distaste for pleasure, and incapable of enjoying the company of even a friend, an aversion for others as well as one's self, life appears horrible, and a death more horrible overtakes the miserable victim in the midst of his career."

Last and most important, cultivate abiding religious impressions, and a sense of the presence of God, and consider his threatenings against all impurity.

To restore the health and vigor of the body "the regimen," says Dr. Woodward, "must be strict, the diet should be simple and nutritious, and suf-

ficient in quantity ; it should be rather plain than light and abstemious ; no stimulating condiments should be used, the suppers should be particularly light, and late suppers should be wholly avoided. All stimulating drinks, even strong tea and coffee, should be discarded ; cider and wine are very pernicious ; tobacco in all its forms not less so."

Cold bathing is an important auxiliary—friction of the skin with a coarse towel or brush—labor or other exercise in the open air is absolutely necessary to increase the strength and cause an equal circulation of blood ; the amount must not be too great, but sufficient to produce such a degree of fatigue as will favor quiet rest. Let the bed be hard, the covering not too warm. Avoid all mental and nervous excitement in the evening, and every thing that might prevent undisturbed repose. Retire to rest, not till inclined to fall asleep, and arise as soon as awake.

This course must be persevered in, and health will gradually return. If the exigency of the case demands active medicines, they should be prescribed by an experienced physician ; but these are to be considered only temporary auxiliaries. The only ground of hope is the renovating power of nature and the grace of God.



RECOMMENDATIONS.

From the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

'Facts and Important Information.' Such is the title of a little pamphlet, by Geo. Gregory, who has collected what is thus presented, from the writings and cases of eminent physicians, the whole relating to the vice of Masturbation. Books on this subject have become somewhat numerous of late, and that they may exert a good influence in opposing the stealthy march of moral and physical pollution, is devoutly to be hoped.

From President Edwards, of the Andover Theo. Sem.

Having read the FACTS, &c., I am satisfied that it is well adapted to do good, and wish that it may have an extensive circulation among the youth of our country.

Andover, Aug. 16, 1841.

J. EDWARDS.

EXTRACTS. We commend the pamphlet to the attention of parents and teachers, as well as to the young themselves.

L. COLEMAN, *Principal of the Teachers Sem.* } *Andover.*
S. H. TAYLOR, " " } *Phillips Academy,*

From the Boston Recorder.—After speaking of the book and referring to recommendations, the Editor remarks:—"On a careful perusal of it, we could cheerfully add our own recommendation, were it not superfluous."

FACTS, &c. This little work relates to a secret habit that blights body, mind and soul, more effectually perhaps, than any other vice. Few are capable of treating a subject of such extreme delicacy, with caution, and yet with sufficient explicitness. The present work, we think will satisfy the judicious teacher or parent.—*Zion's Herald.*

The Facts which this little work develops are startling, and if they may be relied upon,—and we have no doubt but they may,—they should alarm the community generally. We have read the work in question, with deep interest, and recommend it to all who wish for information on this subject.—*N. E. Christian Advocate.*

For recommendations from Professors Stuart and Emerson, Rev. Dr. Woods, Professor Finney, and others, see 5th and 6th pages.